

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges receipt of an Advisory Action dated December 21, 2004. In this response, Applicant has amended claims 1, 4, 12 and 15. Claims 2, 3, 17 and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant submits that entry of these amendments after Final Rejection is proper inasmuch as the PTO has indicated that claims 17 and 18 would be allowable if redrafted in independent form and since these amendments present claim 17 and 18 in independent form by incorporating the features of claim 17 into independent claim 1 and by incorporating the features of claim 18 into claim 15. Claim 4 has been amended for consistency with the language of amended claim 1, and claim 12 has been amended to incorporated the features of amended claim 15.

Since process claim 12 includes all of the features of amended claim 15, Applicant respectfully requests rejoinder and consideration of withdrawn process claims 12-14.

Following entry of these amendments, claims 1 and 4-16 are pending in the application.

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks which follow.

Statement of Substance of Telephonic Interview

During a telephonic interview conducted on January 27, 2005, Mr. Paul Strain and Examiner Hon discussed amending claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 17, amending claim 15 to incorporate the features of claim 18, and amending claim 12 to incorporate the language of amended claim 15. Examiner Hon indicated that these amendments would likely be acceptable since she had indicated that claims 17 and 18 would be allowable if redrafted in independent form in the Office Action dated August 4, 2004. Examiner Hon asked that claim 3 be cancelled and that certain minor amendments be made to claim 4 for consistency with the amended language of claim 1. Examiner Hon further indicated that she would likely rejoin and consider method claims 12-14 if independent method claim 12 were amended to incorporate the language of claim 15.

During a subsequent telephone conference on February 2, 2005, Examiner Hon and Mr. Strain discussed claim 3. Examiner Hon indicated that she would also allow claim 3 since claim 3 depends from and further limits amended claim 1.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action dated August 4, 2004, the PTO has rejected claims 1, 3-11 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,486,507 to Schumacher (hereafter "Schumacher") in view of U.S. Patent 5,612,104 to Grund (hereafter "Grund") as evidenced by Polymer Science Dictionary, 2nd edition by Alger (hereafter "Alger").

While Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 17, which the PTO has indicated as being allowable if redrafted in independent form. Claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. In addition, Applicant has amended claim 15 to incorporate the features of claim 18, which the PTO has also indicated as being allowable if redrafted in independent form.

As discussed on pages 6-7 of the Office Action dated August 4, 2004, the cited prior art of record fails to teach, individually or in combination, the features of claim 17 or the features of claim 18. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 15, and the claims depending therefrom are in *prima facie* allowable form.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding §103 rejections.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. An early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions regarding the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date February 3, 2005

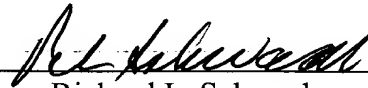
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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.